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THE
DEATH-BED OF POLITICS;

OR, THE
COMING OF THE COMET

In Seven Days.

WITH HUMOUROUS ETCHINGS.

A VISION,

BY A
PLANET-STRUCK POET.

“ Here’s a pretty ruin bruin !
“ What the devil’s here a-doing ?
“ Sure the world’s turned upside down ! ”
OLD SONG.

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P R E F A C E.

DEAR READER,

SUPPOSE a man were to give you a box on the ear,—a circumstance which I sincerely hope may never happen to you;—but suppose, I say, just *suppose*, that some one should salute you in that way, and then, having so done, instead of retreating or exhibiting any symptoms of uneasiness as to consequences, were deliberately to enter upon a grave discourse respecting the art of slapping people on the head, making many learned excursions by the way, on *flat strokes* and *backhanders*, proper mode of delivering the hand, fleshy parts to aim at, &c. would you not consider him a very cool person, to say the least of it?

An author seems to me to act very much in the same way, who, after writing what he calls a *Satire*, that is, after snapping his fingers in the public face, turning up his nose at every body and every thing, and even making game of his “gentle reader,” sits down seriously to a Preface, and there, in the measured terms of criticism, holds forth upon the principles of composition which he has kept in view, talks about the legitimate objects of satire, about serving the ends of truth and virtue under the garb of ridicule, lashing vice, &c. takes notice, pro

bably of Lucian, of Juvenal, of Horace, Boileau, Churchill, and other great names, and in short applies himself to all the learning he is master of, in order to give weight to his performance, and show how important a thing it is *to quizz*.

Now in my humble opinion, when a writer has indulged his humour in a sally of this kind, the less he says about it the better. The world is very well able to stand a flogging,—if our author's goose-quill be but large enough to inflict one on such spacious posteriors,—but it is of opinion, with Quassa, that “*whippy and talky too*” is more than it ought quietly to submit to. Then why am I not myself silent? It would seem that I am writing a Preface, to show that I ought *not* to be writing a Preface! To set this point to rights, it will be proper to ascertain what is the actual nature of the present production. And, first, is it of that kind which has been compared to a box on the ear? I answer no. Then, perhaps, it is only a little slap, only a gentle pat on the cheek of the age? I reply that whatever it is, it is nothing for which I can be in any degree responsible, for it is a *Dream*. And this circumstance, I consider, fully establishes the propriety of a few prefatory remarks, because—otherwise—it might be supposed that the following pages represented my waking ideas, whereas I am very much scandalised at them, and regret exceedingly that it has been my painful duty, to record particulars of so shocking a nature. That it *was* my duty so to do, will presently appear; in the mean time I content myself with cautioning the reader against the notion, that I can be myself anywise partial to such

unseemly exhibitions as those, which these pages unfold. Nor will my *candour* in this matter, I trust, be overlooked. Many Authors, in their prefaces, resemble a hen that stands chucking for half an hour over the small matter of an egg; but I, with something rather of the old rabbit about me, am here actually found snubbing my own offspring.

The fact is, the scenes which are here described were witnessed by me in my sleep one night, after an indigestible supper of cold oysters and porter, and are so full of improper vagaries, that no well regulated mind, I am sure, will regard them with approbation. For my own part, being—as I elsewhere notice—of an extremely sober and grave turn of mind, and hitherto only known to my friends by my habits of attention to business,—for we are in the hosiery line,—I look back with perfect amazement and confusion, at the extraordinary flight which my unwonted imagination seems to have indulged in, on the night adverted to, and am persuaded that another such dream as this would be quite sufficient to ruin my credit, and entirely upset my prospects in life!—The next question therefore is, why have I felt myself under the necessity of communicating the circumstance to the public?—And here, I should think, it must occur to all persons of reflection, that I could not with propriety have acted otherwise than I have done. So unaccountable a dream was not likely to have visited the slumbers of a quiet man like myself, *without a reason*. The humblest individuals, we know, have often been the chosen instruments, through which truths of the first importance have been disco-

vered to mankind. We also know that *dreams* have, from time immemorial, been the favorite vehicle of such divine communications. Placed in these delicate circumstances—for there could be no question of the real nature of my situation—what was I to do? Was I to keep, to myself, information obviously imparted for the purpose of diffusion? Was I not, on the contrary, bound—in the most sacred manner—to give to it the utmost publicity in my power? Every man of a just way of thinking will reply in the affirmative.

Therefore I repeat that I have been impelled to this course, by nothing whatever but a paramount sense of duty. Happy should I have been, could I have conscientiously declined it. As a lover of peace, order, and the well-being of society, it cannot be doubted that I should have been indeed glad of any excuse, by which I could have avoided the necessity of putting my hand to a history, so little calculated, I fear, to illustrate or uphold those objects.

I confess I have been no little surprised to think that Jupiter, to whom of course I am indebted for this dream, since all dreams, as the classical reader must know, descend from him,—that Jupiter, I say, should here have turned out, so contrarily to my impression of him, to be a Reformer if not a Radical! I had always, to my own mind, pictured the Father of the Gods as a stout old Tory, with a proper regard for the established order of things, and a fixed aversion to all innovation; and, accepting it as one evidence of this spirit, have never ceased to admire the exemplary manner in which he

punished the presumption of such meddling, impudent Jacobins, as Apollo, Vulcan, and others. What can have happened above to bring liberal principles into fashion, I know not. Perhaps there has been a change of ministry. Perhaps the Thunderer has lost *his Juno*, who—though a lady—was, as is well known, not less an active politician than a tolerable virago ; and, being herself an out-and-out Conservative, is suspected by more people than Homer to have exercised an influence over the mind of her Royal Consort, that led him sometimes to give the nod, and shake the spheres, to an effect he had not otherwise approved of. But this is a question which I must leave for the consideration of the learned, as I do not profess much acquaintance with the politics of the Court of Olympus.

It only remains to speak of the manner in which I have executed my divine commission. As I had no commands respecting style or metre, I concluded that the good old ballad form would be as acceptable to the Gods, if not to men, as any other. The division into days was a matter of course ; it was exactly in that order that the circumstances of the vision were presented to my imagination. Nor have I, in describing the minutest particulars, ventured to depart from the actual arrangement they took in my mind at the time. I may be allowed to observe, however, that when there appeared any opportunity for doing so, I have not hesitated to introduce appropriate moral observations. I beg particularly to call attention to the evidences of this praiseworthy spirit contained in the fifth and sixth days, where the shocking events and stirring situations,

which succeed one another with such fearful rapidity, are in no instance passed by without such reflections and comments as are calculated to carry improving lessons to the hearts of all readers.

I have now performed my task, and it is for a discerning public to say whether I have acquitted myself in a manner worthy the magnitude and importance of the trust reposed in me. I hope they will bear in mind the extremely arduous nature of the undertaking, unprecedented, it may be truly said, in the field of literature; and that they will, above all, duly weigh the difficulties of the situation, in which the modest and unpretending individual before them is placed,—called suddenly from a private station to one of rare but unwished-for distinction, literally plucked from the counter, in fact, to be the proud medium of a divine revelation!

If, then, the public be pleased to patronise this humble effort of the Muse, I shall have nothing to regret in the circumstance of the dream, which has given rise to it; if not,—why then I must resolutely avoid oyster suppers in future.

THE
DEATH-BED OF POLITICS,

&c. &c.

F I R S T D A Y.

ARGUMENT.

The Poem opens with an Address after the simple Manner of the old English Masters. Disposition to dream. "Methought." A short Digression, giving some Account of the Author's Poetical Education; The distinguished Persons under whom he studied; Professional Secrets; Extraordinary Progress made by him; Point of Eminence attained; Finishing Lessons. Subject resumed. Alarming discovery from a Parlour Window.

1.

YE Christians all, and Pagans too, and followers of Mahomet,
It equally concerns you all to hear about a Comet,
 That's blazing in the sky,
 And it's coming by and by,
And it's quite out of the question, to think of getting from it!

2.

You must know I dream dreams,—as many other people do,
What's more, I've just been having one,—but, then, what's that to you?
 Why—to serve you as a warning,
 For it happened in the morning,
So of course you may be sure that it will all come true.

3.

Methought—in dreams what things we think!—methought 'twas very hot,
Whereas, in point of fact, you know, it really is not,—

But it *was*, if you remember,

About the middle of September,

And 'twas then the Comet first was spied, as you may not have forgot.

4.

Methought,—methinks, for poetry, there's nothing like "*methought!*"
I'm sure 'twas made on purpose,—nor, I fancy, is there aught

So adorns one's composition

As an artful repetition;—

But, perhaps, you'd like to know the school in which I have been taught?

5.

I studied under Bailey first,—the famous Thomas Haines,—

And, under that consummate master, took such constant pains,

That I soon acquired the art of him,

And at last so got the start of him,

As to beat him altogether, both at "*honeymoons*" and "*swains*."

6.

Papa and 'ma, delighted at my getting on so well,

Were good enough to send me, for a year, to L. E. L.

Where a "*Keepsake*" being bought me,

All the new effects were taught me,

Besides some useful secrets, which I promised not to tell.

7.

One only that I feel myself at liberty to name,

Was—"always make the leading words of every verse the same;"—

I got so good at this,

That I wrote a little piece

Of four-and-twenty stanzas, and they each began "*She came!*"

8.

In this *conjugating** style I also proved a great adept,
 The next piece published was "*She's gone!*" soon after which—" *He wept!*"
 Till each number, tense, and person,
 I'd a separate piece of verse on,—
 " *She sighed!*" produced " *We laughed!*"—" *He wrote*" was followed
 by " *They slept!*"

* The following list, which contains such of the productions in this style, as the author can at present call to his memory, may be relied upon. He regrets he cannot improve it, as he might have done to an unlimited extent, had he been in possession of more *boudoir* literature than it is his lot to boast. "*She bloomed*"—" *She is gone*"—" *He said*"—" *She died*"—" *She smiled*"—" *He never smiled again*"—" *She ne'er forgot*"—" *I ne'er shall forget*"—" *We met*"—" *I met her*"—" *O yes, I often think of her*"—" *Oh! no, we never mention her*"—" *You say they never mention me*"—" *They said I must not sing,*" &c.

This style ought certainly to have some distinguishing title assigned to it, since it has of late years come into such general favour and adoption, as to form a sort of new feature in literature. I have ventured to designate it as above, for the present, but the term I have employed is, I am sensible, far too commonplace for the occasion; besides, it is so absurdly intelligible, that you actually know what it means, directly you read it! A defect which has become unparadonable, and is quite repugnant to the refinement of the age. Therefore I desire it to be understood merely as temporary;—it is, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, *mere trumpery*;—and I hope some professor of the *belles lettres* at Cambridge or Oxford will, before his next course of lectures begins, consult his Scapula, and thence compound us some euphonious polysyllable in *ectic* or *actic*, that he may launch it forth to the world ex cathedra, without loss of time. How sweet and simple is that way of beginning with the third person preterite of the indicative! *She did this*—*He did that*—*They did so and so*.—*Who* she is, or he is, &c. has nothing to do with the matter, and is not mentioned. By this plan, we have the advantage of rendering ourselves independent of Chloe and Daphne, who formerly went to the verb. And surely the sentiment is the same, whether the smile or the sigh proceed from the nominative expressed, or from the substantive understood!—whether from Chloe, or from the charming Lady Emmeline herself! I remember very well the rule for parsing given in the grammar; it says—" *to find the nominative case, ask the question who?*" now in poetry it would be very impertinent to ask the question who, whatever it might be at school. None but your matter-of-fact people would think of it, and it would evince a deplorable backwardness of education, as well as ignorance of "the new effects." To poetical minds, this degree of concealment is an unspeakable beauty. In that justly popular little piece—" *Here we go up, up, up, and there we go down, down, down,*"—what reader ever thinks of inquiring *who* went up, up, or *who* went down, down? It is quite sufficient to know that the parties were so engaged. I therefore consider that the family of the pronouns have been most deservedly promoted to their present distinction and importance. Many of the productions, which I am thus in my humble way endeavouring to applaud, have—as well as the last-mentioned—been wedded to music, and have called forth composers, whose celebrity begins to make the names of Mozart and Haydn sound ridiculous. Many of these are gifted with a natural genius so extraordinary that, like the Marquis in "*Les Precieuses*," they find it unnecessary to learn any thing. One thing we may with truth affirm, which is, that the amateurs are generally quite a match for the *professors*, whether in originality of invention, or a knowledge of the rules of composition.

9.

To the highest walk my friends then judged, I might with safety pass ;
My attempts had been as yet confined to the pathetic class,

But I learnt to be *sublime*,

When I'd been a little time

With Lady Mary, Sophy, Emmelina, Fitz-Parnasse !

10.

Another vast improvement, too, I owed to her exertion,—

I had only writ plain English yet, which is held in great aversion,

But in “ *bulbuls*” now a dealer,

I began to write genteeler,

And scorned to say a thing in English, when I knew the Persian.

11.

My productions then so various grew, as scarce to be computable,

Nor could Mary Howit's self write things, for annuals so suitable ;

No,—though I says it as shouldn't,

I'm positive she couldn't,—

Neither in the affecting style, nor yet in the inscrutable.

12.

And thus, sir, I was finished.—But, to return from this digression ;—

Methought the heat had now derived considerable accession,

Which astonished us the more,

Since the day was nearly o'er,

And we all had hoped, when evening came, to escape from the oppression.

13.

Now sitting at the parlour window, after having dined,

And naturally being of a reflecting turn of mind,

Thinks I,—“ what is the reason

“ Of this extraordinary season ?

“ Sure something more than common must be stirring in the wind.”

14.

So with that, I threw the window up, and began to look about,
 And there, good heavens ! to be sure, I found it all out ;
 A queer thing in the sky
 Very soon caught my eye,
 And oh ! it was the Comet, sir, there could not be a doubt !

 S E C O N D D A Y .

ARGUMENT.

*Growth of the Comet. Form and Appearance. Dismal Surmise.
 How the Comet affected the Consol-Market. How it operated
 upon the Press. Meeting of the Reformed Parliament. Agita-
 ted State of the Public Mind. King's Speech. Curious Circum-
 stance respecting it, for the Reader's private Ear. Unfortunate
 Misunderstanding arising therefrom. Dilemma of Ministers.*

1.

METHOUGHT 'twas now the second day, and you might see all eyes
 Turned eagerly towards the east, to see the Comet rise,
 But oh ! the sudden change,
 As terrible as strange !
 Bright as a rocket now it rose, five times its former size !

2.

Now the tail was seen above, and might be three times as long,
 So it struck me,—for I love to have some figures in my song,—
 That it seemed to the creation
 A huge mark of admiration !
 And aptly seemed to indicate that things were going wrong.

3.

Folks now began to think themselves in an awkward situation,
 For this Comet, it was evident to men of observation,
 Was coming like a shot to us,
 To do I don't know what to us !
 A thought, you may be sure, which caused no little consternation.

4.

Though *we* looked *up*, the *funds* looked *down*, so great a panic grew,
 And as for prices, they, alas ! which way to look scarce knew !
 Nor could Consols bear that sight,
 But immediately took fright,
 They hung their tender heads in grief—and closed at 82 !

5.

Yet, thanks to this phenomenon, the press proceeded gaily ;
 Some thirty-two new magazines were forthwith published daily ;
 We'd the “ Halfpenny Astronomer ”—
 But I have not time to run 'em o'er,
 If you'd wish to see the editors, they're all in the Old Bailey.

6.

Then met that famous spouting club, the great law-manufactory,
 Of which it's so impossible to say any thing detractory ;
 That thing yclept the Parliament,
 Which, on a time, King Charley meant
 To bundle altogether, 'cause some people were refractory.

7.

Methought,—in dreams what things we think ! as I have said, and say—
 Methought, this thing was now *reformed* ! and was to meet to day ;
 For an awful proclamation
 Had advertised the nation
 Of some business of great consequence, that would not bear delay.

8.

Now all Whitehall was one dense mass, as far as eyes could reach,
For extreme was the anxiety to hear the King's speech;
As to editors of papers,
They actually cut capers,
They sold so many copies more that day, you see, of each.

9.

One rather curious fact it will be proper here to state ;—
So great had been the royal hurry, and the royal fears so great,
That,—the servants of the Crown
Having all gone out of town,—
The King had writ the speech himself, for fear of being late !

10.

“ The urgent nature of the case,” thinks he, “ this course compels ;”
But the Ministers, while some were shooting, some were picking shells,
So they came down to the House,
From their pleasures and their grouse,
Knowing nothing more about the speech than any body else !

11.

Now, when the head was in the crown, and the Chancellor in his station,
And things, and men, and all, at last, in their proper situation,
Then the King, who rather trembled
To see them all assembled,
Delivered himself as follows, not without much agitation :—

12.

“ My lords, this is no time, I think, for metaphors or flowers,—
“ You know as well, now, what I mean, as if I talked for hours !
“ When we're all at death's door,
“ What matters any more
“ The friendliest assurances from all Foreign Powers ?”

13.

“ *The Comet* then’s the only question now to be discussed,
 “ Which my Ministers will, therefore, use their best means to adjust ;
 “ With them and you it lies
 “ Such measures to devise
 “ As will save the country, and restore tranquillity, I trust.”

14.

’Twas then that Grey he looked at Brougham—and Brougham he looked
 at Grey,
 For neither, for the life of him, could think of what to say ;
 But as, luckily, ’twas late,
 So they put off the debate,
 And in spite of the said Comet, they adjourned till next day.

T H E T H I R D D A Y.

ARGUMENT.

The Comet overlooked. Awful Mistake. The Measures of Relief. Public Curiosity. House of Lords. Unaccountable Absence of Ministers. Various Rumours. The real Fact. Handle made of it by Conservatives. Animated Speeches. Extraordinary Measures propounded. Machinations of the Enemy. Providential Escape of the Comet and the Whigs.

1.

THE third day came,—“ but where’s the Comet ?” all the folks begun,
 Oh mercy ! ’twas so big, sir, they mistook it for the sun !
 He had risen to be sure,
 But he now seemed quite obscure,
 And as for any light, he might as well have had none !

2.

Yet our notice of the Comet was comparatively brief,
For nothing scarce was talked of but those measures of relief,
Which were promised, as is shewn,
In the speech from the throne ;
Of all themes of speculation, this—no wonder—was the chief.

3.

Great crowds again got round the House,—but how it made all stare,—
With exception of the Chancellor, not a Minister was there !
The fact—at which some grinned, sir—
Was that they were all at Windsor !
The “ Courier ” got the news first, which made the “ Globe ” swear.

4.

From this, of course, a thousand different stories were invented,
However, there was one account, with which I rest contented ;
A great personage, 'twas said,
Could not possibly be made
To see the reason of the case his servants represented.

5.

Now the *Ins*, you see, called this behaviour “ obstinate ” and “ strange ; ”
Not so the *Outs*,—for they'd no mind the difference to arrange,
So they used another term,
And called it being “ *firm*, ”*—
And moreover gave some broadish hints of a ministerial change.

6.

Then rose up in the Lords, a famous warlike politician,
'Twas not, he said, in any spirit of factious opposition,
But seeing the state of things,
As a servant of the King's,
He felt called upon to raise his voice, for fear of a sedition.

* See the opposition papers of the early part of May, 1832, *passim*.

7.

“ My lords,” he said, “ we all assembled here, in the persuasion
 “ That Ministers would move some measures suited to the occasion,
 “ But their weakness now discovering,
 “ They’ve deserted their poor Sovereign,*
 “ And left this country open to an unparalleled invasion !”

8.

There were those, he said, who would have served the King with more
 devotion ;
 He had no desire for office,—but he had certainly a notion
 That if *somebody* was minister,
 Things would not look so sinister ;—
 He concluded with a wish for peace, and made the following motion.

9.

“ That the British Isles be forthwith in a state of siege proclaimed,—
 “ A proper system of defence in general council framed,—
 “ All the cannon before dark
 “ Placed, mouth-upwards, in the Park,—
 “ And, to conduct the whole, a generalissimo be named !”

10.

Now, burning with the memory of the disfranchising clause,
 See Bigwig rise ;—“ You own the crisis,—can you doubt the cause ?
 “ When you think of that atrocious,
 “ That infernal, that ferocious,
 “ That execrable”—here his voice was lost in the applause.

11.

Then some were for a vote of censure, some were for protesting,
 While others thought impeachment was incomparably the best thing ;
 An old Earl said, he’d reason
 To think there was high treason,—
 And he spoke of his grey hairs, which made him very interesting.

* See the opposition papers of the early part of May, 1832, *passim*.

12.

By means like these, the noble lords designed to overthrow
Not the enemy above so much, as the enemy below ;—

But that, when we're too impetuous,

It's a matter of regret to us—

Is the moral now, which I expect this narrative to show.

13.

The Duke, you see, he thought, poor man, he was doing something
clever,

And seeing the Bishops there and all, thinks he—" It's now or never,"—

So he calls for a division

With his usual decision,—

But alas ! the fallen hero ! he was beat as clean as ever !

14.

For while the dear Conservatives are running all these rigs,
See, rolling down from Windsor, sundry carriages and gigs, —

'Tis Grey in full authority,

With a very snug majority ;—

Thus escaped, sir, from their enemies—the Comet and the Whigs.

F O U R T H D A Y.

ARGUMENT.

Fresh Horrors. Pope found to be in error. Meeting of the Commons. Praise-God-Pitiful's Motion. Unhappy End of that Gentleman. Hot Debate. Conservative Speeches. Cobbett's Speech. Attwood's Essay. Joe's View of the Question. New Party in the House. Interruption of Debate by supernatural Agency. Necessity of Adjournment.

1.

THE fourth day came, and now to judge from personal appearance,
 No one could doubt the Comet meant to make a general clearance ;
 For with his monstrous size,
 He so occupied the skies,
 That Heaven seemed scarcely to support the horrid interference !

2.

But, hark ! what rumbling sound is this, that seems like muffled thunder,
 And yet no storm, no cloud in sight ? —Thus spoke we in our wonder.
 Pope, who thought we had no ears
 For the “ music of the spheres,”
 Little fancied what would happen to convict him of a blunder.

3.

No philosopher, however, was surprised at what occurred,
 From appearances alone, the case was readily inferred ;
 The Comet, which had been
 Hitherto no more than *seen*,
 Was now, — so Heaven defend us, sir,—beginning to be *heard* !

4.

"Twas thought now, nay the "Times" supposed, — which is mistaken rarely,
That the consultation with the King at length had ended fairly;
But Place, whose news of course is
From the most authentic sources,
Announced next morning that Lord Grey "returned to Windsor early."

5.

The speeches in the Lords last night, on the subject now before us,
Perhaps the reader thinks were not remarkably decorous;
Their Lordships, I allow,
Made a tolerable row,
But, bless you!—this was nothing to what happened in the *Lower* House.

6.

'Twas expected the debate, to-night, high matters would embrace,
And a large attendance of the House accordingly took place;
Some to say long speeches off,
Some to cheer, and some to cough; —
But all were first engaged to hear—a sermon upon grace.

7.

For now had Praise-God-Pitiful, repenting to the last,
Given notice of a motion for a universal fast,—
Which, with jealous eye observing,
Alarmed grew Mr. Irving,
For well he knew how Praise-God once, even *his* might had surpassed.

8.

Favoured indeed of Heaven, and most—in the article of wits,—
Frequent had been, and glorious, his evangelic hits;
Yet he quite outdid, somehow,
His brightest efforts now,—
And swooning in the Speaker's arms, was carried out in fits.

9.

A conversation then ensued, a little miscellaneous,
 Till a famous Tory rising, as with impulse instantaneous,
 Spoke for three hours and a quarter,
 I'm sure it was not shorter;
 And only think!—to talk so long,—and all extemporaneous!

10.

He shewed to what extremities this country had been driven;—
 “ No wonder such a Ministry provoked the wrath of Heaven;
 “ And what conduct could be stranger,
 “ When at length they saw their danger?—
 “ They had duped the country, and that House, by the pledges they had
 given!”

11.

“ But a time was come, when Englishmen their proper interests knew,
 “ And the framers of the Speech would find such conduct would not do;
 “ Were the hopes and expectation,
 “ Nay—the lives—of a whole nation
 “ To be left,” he asked, “ at mercy to the incompetence of a few?”

12.

Then presently up gets Sir Charles—your orators the pink of—
 Who thinks of all that he can say, and says all he can think of;
 Still rambling, quoting, quizzing,
 The mood he always is in,
 And exulting in the laugh he keeps the House upon the brink of.

13.

In speaking of the Comet, this indomitable Thracian
 Was *put in mind*,—for who can boast such powers of association?—
 Of that measure of Reform,
 On which soon getting warm,
 By easy stages he was led to Catholic Emancipation!

14.

Then, having got on Irish ground, —he could not help perceiving
 That Durham had returned to us, without any thing achieving;—
 On our rupture with the Dutch
 He remembers next to touch,—
 Which reminds him, that our policy in Portugal is grieving.

15.

In concluding no slight speech, he said—" the Ministers were wrong,
 " Because they were in Office they conceived themselves strong," —
 (Just then in haste he reaches up
 His hand to pull his breeches up,)
 " *But all that could be done would never keep them there long!*"

16.

But you don't suppose Reformers could be silent all this while;
 If they get a good jobation, yet they give it back in style.
 First Cobbett—though he said
 It was time to go to bed—
 Vouchsafed a few remarks, to shew that every thing was vile.

17.

" How often, Sir, have I told Peel this crisis would arrive;
 " Yes, the Comet's come, — *I knew* it would! and I'm glad you're all alive
 " To see *the thing I meant*,
 " And to suffer and repent;—
 " You didn't choose to mind me then, so now let Grey contrive."

18.

Tom Attwood, too, from Birmingham, he gave us an harangue,
 In the course of which he showed the House how he and Scholefield sang—
 In harmonious communion—
 The " Gathering of the Union,"
 " That glorious strain," he said, " whence all the enthusiasm sprang!"

19.

Then came Joe, with his accounts in hand ;—the Ministers he scolded
For sums laid out in telescopes, and carefully unfolded
 How much the Comet cost us,
 And exactly what it was t'us ;—
First he shewed us what each item made, then reckoned what the whole did.

20.

But vainly should I hope to give a tithe of their debating,
Which each succeeding hour there seemed less chance of terminating ;
 To one source of confusion
 I have yet made no allusion,
Which, however, as a striking fact, I think deserves relating.

21.

'Twas when members first were canvassing that Biela was discerned,
Now the new electors judging comets could not be adjourned,
 Such effect had this, I find,
 In influencing their mind,—
That no less than twelve astronomers had duly been returned.

22.

These gentlemen, methought, although extremely scientific,
Having pledged themselves to make a stir, were apt to be prolific,
 And what made it worse, you see,
 They could none of them agree,
And the tendency of their disputes was not the most pacific.

23.

And now high words had soon, I ween, to fiercest discord grown,
But that the Comet's dreadful noise, o'erpowering e'en their own,
 So drowned each speaker's voice,
 That it left to them no choice,
And finding all their efforts vain,—why they let the thing alone.

F I F T H D A Y.

ARGUMENT.

Important Fact for Astronomers. St. Stephen's again. The Speaker's ingenious Expedient. Unhappy Consequences. How brought on. Crisis unparalled in the Parliamentary History of this Country. The Bard first hints the Impossibility of Description; then describes. A Relation ensues, surpassing, in sublimity and awful Grandeur, any thing in Homer or Milton. Serious and shocking Event which takes all Parties by surprise, including the Reader. Moral Effects. Impressive Scene at Windsor. King's Message. Archbishop's Interview with his Majesty. Sentimental Dinner. Last Moments of a British Parliament.

1.

THE fifth day came, and all the world was up again betimes,
 But what they saw—oh, heavens! it is too mighty for these rhymes!
 Suffice it then to say,
 They turned their heads away,
 And those, who had any consciences, bethought them of their crimes.

2.

What seemed most strange, and doubtless with received opinions clashed,—
 That fire, which had at first alarmed us, now no longer flashed;
 We had thought, as we had learnt,
 That we all were to be *burnt*,
 But now the time approached, we found we should be only—*smashed*.

3.

Once more within thy sacred walls, St. Stephen, let me enter,
 There where the virtues love to dwell, where wit and talent centre;
 “What!” I hear the reader say,
 “Did they meet again to day?”
 Yes, though the Comet's roar would now have overpowered a Stentor!

4.

But, if at this you wonder, sir, still more you would have wondered
At Mr. Speaker's foresight, who, observing how it thundered,
All of his own accord,
Without ever saying a word,
Had considerably ordered—speaking-trumpets for 500!

5.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker!—it was very well intended,
But you made matters worse, Sir, instead of having mended;
Your motives, Sir, were pure,
Of that we feel quite sure,—
But how shocked, I think you must have felt, to see the way it ended!

6.

Fiercer and fiercer now in spirit the disputants became,
For such clamour was beginning all their passions to inflame;
And they puffed, sir, and they blew
Those unlucky trumpets through,—
Till noisy grew the mute at last, and savage grew the tame!

7.

'Twas in a sharp philippic, which to Government referred,
By no noise Gods or men could make, was Dan to be deterred;
So, determined that his speech
Ministerial ears should reach,
He stepped across the House to them, the better to be heard.

8.

There was nothing in this act alone, to cause offence, you know,
But unhappily, when he got there, he flourished his trumpet so,
And that quite close to Stanley,—
That the latter, being manly,
Instinctively resented such an insult with a blow!

Fifth day V. II. 2c



9.

As when the thunder-storm comes on, for about the first half-hour,
 The gathering clouds collect their might, but are content to lower,
 Yet,—let but one drop fall,—
 That instant you have it all,
 Not a moment intervening 'twixt the drop and the whole shower;—

10.

So the deadly hate, which looks as yet and words alone confessed,
 All of a sudden came to be substantially expressed;
 In fact the storm that blew,
 No gradual progress knew,
 And the impulse given to one, sir, was imparted to the rest.

11.

Now, hark! where a hundred trumpets raise the dreadful cry of war!
 To the ministerial benches see them flocking from afar!
 Oh! how can I allude
 To the scene which here ensued?
 I'm not quite certain, but I think I read it in the "Star."

12.

Such scene, as never Senate knew in days of Greece or Rome,
 One which, I fear, would forfeit e'en the praises of De Lolme!
 It would have done you good
 To have seen how Graham stood;—
 O'Connell had a vow in heaven, and so he went home.

13.

But see where Cobbett comes, "a pack of knaves" politely terming 'em,
 And having finished his remarks, is with a stick confirming 'em;
 On Hobhouse first he fell,
 But that member managed well,
 Screening himself entirely under an address from Birmingham.

14.

Hereat the more enraged perhaps—as shewing the use of *paper*,—
He turns, and turning—puts his foot on a famous linen-drawer,
 Who had lain upon the floor
 Till it should be all o’er,
But now—“This is too bad,” exclaimed, “Vy, they use me like a scraper!”

15.

Then, snatching up a telescope, which lay upon the ground,
A certain city banker dealt his fury all around,
 And paid away each claimant,—
 But at last he stopped payment,
When a shock—like none since twenty-five—in Althorp’s fist he found!

16.

Now what do you think became of the representative for Preston?
Awhile he stands considering, what side his hopes to rest on,
 Till the Ministers seeming stronger,
 He hesitates no longer,
And so makes haste to join their ranks,—but the spec was not his best one:

17.

For before he’d time —unhappy man!—even to explain the meeting,
They set upon him all at once, and gave him such a beating,
 That he turned about—as few
 Know better how to do—
And towards his Tory friends lost not a moment in retreating.

18.

Then, oh! the base ingratitude, when the Tories saw him run,
They gave him just as sound a beating as the Whigs had done!
 Thus drubbed by either party,
 In a manner alike hearty,
“ Ah, me!” the falling member cries, “ had I but stuck to one!”

19.

A Reformer, whom a Tory had got hold of by the leg,
Exclaims, " Help! help! Lord Palmerston, assist me now, I beg ;"—
 Hard by that Lord was standing,
 A protocol his hand in,
Non-interference was his creed,—so he would not stir a peg.

20.

Now rose the conflict to its height of rage and furious zeal ;
Here in a heap confused you saw—Croker, Russell, Sadler, Shiel,
 Here Attwood and his brother,
 Fighting one upon another,—
Here Hume on Wetherell, Peel on Hume, and Cobbett upon Peel!

21.

To the Speaker, 'tis but due to say, his labours were intense,
Why unsuccessful—must be plain, to every man of sense ;
 On distraction nearly bordering,
 And quite hoarse with " *Order Order-ing*—
Besides, he had far too much to do in the way of self-defence.

22.

He despatched a message to the Lords, I should however say,
Requesting that assistance might be sent without delay ;
 Who answered in a hurry,
 That they were extremely sorry,
But unfortunately were engaged in the very same way !

23.

But what no rules, in either House, could ever have effected,—
Nor the riot-act itself, perhaps, nor the whole police collected,
 What all things else, in fact,
 The power of doing lacked,—
The *Comet* did, and did it, too, in a way not much expected.

24.

At nine seconds—(in Astronomy, you can't be too particular)—
After four, p.m.—solar time—(clock time, you know, is fickl-er)

A crash, the most tremendous,

That seemed enough to end us,

Saluted, very strikingly, the nerves we call auricular.

25.

Some thought it was the Comet come, and with fear were like to sink,—
But the Comet would have crushed them, ere they could so much as wink ;

Some thought, but they mistook,

'Twas the artillery of the Duke ;

Some thought it was Guy Fawkes below,—some didn't know what to
think !

26.

Be it what it may, they all get up,—and so the conflict ceases,—
But their horror, you may well conceive, in some degree increases,

When, scampering off hard

Through the hall into the yard,

Oh ! what d'ye think they see ?—poor moon !—entirely knocked to pieces !

27.

These pieces now, I know no more their final destination
Than *the man*—nay, nay, not him indeed,— consider his situation !

His fame, 'tis true, is owing

To that way of never knowing,

But here, at least, none could enjoy—such means of information !

28.

However, what I mean is this—it never was quite known
To what corner of the universe the broken bits were thrown ;

And indeed we very soon

Left off thinking of the moon,

For 'twas evident her fate was but a prelude to our own.

29.

As when two ships by rocks are pent, they've each enough to do,
 So by the Comet both beset, our cry was *sauve qui peut*,—
 And when we saw our satellite
 On such a rock as *that* alight,
 'Twas high time to prepare for wreck, ourselves, I think,—don't you ?

30.

Now the best effects may spring, we know, from causes most injurious,
 The effect which this catastrophe produced was really curious,—
 You now beheld M.P.'s,
 Slowly rising from their knees,
 Turn, meek and humble, to that House—they'd just come out of, furious.

31.

Nor was this the only good effect, the accident had brought,—
 Oh ! Muse, declare what timely change in the King's mind it wrought,
 Who having all this while,
 In the usual " firm " style,
 Refused to take advice, at last began to think he ought.

32.

From hour to hour, and day to day, his Ministers in vain
 The nature of a Comet had been labouring to explain,—
 With its orbits, and its axes,
 And strange things that paid no taxes,
 Perihelion and aphelion—till he thought they were insane !

33.

" Its course, it is elliptical, your Majesty," says one ;—
 " Equal areas in equal times," says another, " round the sun ;"
 Says a third—" Sire, if you'd seen
 " The Penny Magazine,
 " No account would now have been required, for there it's all done."—

34.

“ Then, considering all this,” they said, “ your Majesty must know

“ That interference is impossible, to mortals here below ;”

But the King he would not hear them,—

If the Comet was so near them,

He was sure that something might be done, and he would not leave it so.

35.

What vexed him most, nay, made him urge immediate prosecutions,—
Was to hear them talk, so coolly, of its *making revolutions* !

“ He’d enough of that before,

“ And he’d not have any more,

“ Nor could those, he thought, who talked that way, revere our institutions !”

36.

Such was the point affairs had reached,—he—all advice declining,
And the Premier just beginning then to talk about resigning,—

When, that dreadful crash being heard,

Down they fell without a word,—

King and all, upon their marrow-bones, in the 100th Psalm combining !

37.

Now shift the scene again, my Muse,—say why the King’s contrition
Should cause Lord Grey to come to town, with so much expedition.

Uncheered he came,—for fear

Had stifled every cheer,—

But came not unobserved, his look bespoke important mission.

38.

“ His Majesty,” his lordship said, “ instructed him to say,

“ That after the event, that had been witnessed that day,

“ He had come to the conviction

“ That there could be no restriction,

“ That the Comet must, in short, be left—to have its own way.

39.

“ With reference to the promise, in the speech from the throne,
 “ The King,—with all that frankness, which he had ever shown,—
 “ Had commanded him (Lord Grey)
 “ Most explicitly to say,
 “ That *the measure of relief* was an idea of his own.

40.

“ He had hoped that something might be done ; but finding nothing
 could,
 “ Let his subjects keep the laws, at least,—let tumult be withstood ;
 “ Let them not meet their fate
 “ In an unbecoming state,
 “ But be—crushed to atoms peaceably, as a loyal people should !”

41.

When his lordship thus had brought the royal message to a close,
 And taken his seat again, his Grace of Canterbury rose,
 And the grandeur of his “ *hem !*”
 Made it evident to them
 Who heard him, that he'd some important matter to propose.

42.

The fact was this,—the King, who was the author of the whole,
 When he found the new distress beyond his Ministers' control,
 Had taken now to piety
 In the uttermost anxiety,
 And had sent for the Archbishop, to inquire about his soul.

43.

The result of this inquiry—I'm afraid I have forgot
 Whether 'twas altogether satisfactory or not—
 So here we'll draw the curtain,
 But of this you may be certain—
 One question, of great moment, was decided on the spot.

44.

“ My lord Archbishop, ’tis with you, this matter now must rest,”
Said the King, “ and I desire that you will speedily suggest
 “ How our sins may be forgiven,
 “ And our peace be made with heaven ;—
“ What course do you propose, sir, for you ought to know the best ?

45.

“ So now, why don’t you speak, eh ?—What’s the good of standing there ?”
For the other hung his head, and looked the picture of despair ;—
 “ Going to sleep, I do believe !”
And he plucked him by the sleeve,—
“ Sir, you’ll please, d’ye hear, to appoint a day of fasting and of prayer.”

46.

Archy till now entranced had seemed, but when he heard of fasting,
He slightly shuddered, raised his head—his eyes towards heaven casting,—
 And then, as if at length
 Collecting all his strength,
“ God’s will be done,” he sighing said, “ His mercy’s everlasting.”

47.

With a heavy heart, weighed down by grief’s intolerable load,
He starts for town, but stops to take—his dinner on the road ;
 Oh ! the thought that that repast
 Might, haply, be his last,
Made the trickling tears spoil all a plate of lampreys-a-là-mode !

48.

In the House, his grace enlarged upon—“ that pastoral solicitude,
“ Which towards his flock he had exercised, in every vicissitude ;”
 And,—after having read
 His motion through,—he said
“ If the vengeance of the Lord could be by aught appeased,—by this it
 would.”

49.

All parties now alike were mute, abased, and broken-hearted,—
 So it passed without division, no objection being started ;
 And thus collective wisdom,—
 Though some shocking people quizzed 'em,—
 Closed their labours for the day, and then in gloomy silence parted.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH DAYS.

ARGUMENT.

Horrors ineffable. Principal Feature. Overwhelming Sense of their Situation, displayed by all living creatures. Pious Proceedings. Wonderful and edifying Change observable generally, and in certain People particularly. Little Anecdote ; Moral. Newspapers. Solemn Invocation. Lament for the Press. Last Scene of Action. Where chosen. Why. Probable Reasons. Philosophical Reflections on Death and Burial. Maxim from Horace. Bird's Eye View of a great Personage at Confession. Generous Fit. Magnanimity of a Placeman. Piety of a great Chief. Remorse of a Judge. Voluntary Sacrifice of Beauty. Aspect of the Literary Circles. All the Wits at their wits' ends. Sorrow and Repentance, Truth, Hope, Faith—and a Variety of wonderful Things never heard of before, and of which the Reader will probably never have an Opportunity of hearing again.

1.

THE sixth day came, but to describe—the noise, the smell, the smother,
 Or appearance of the Comet now,—all human sense would bother ;
 From horizon to horizon
 It was all we put our eyes on,
 And when it set at one side,—it was rising at another !

2.

But that which was, undoubtedly, the most appalling feature,
And raised such horror in the breast of every living creature,

As overwhelmed them quite,—

Was the universal night

In which his dreadful shadow now enwrapped the face of Nature!—

3.

“ Total eclipse,” indeed ! “ no sun,”—for he was seen no more,—

“ No moon,”—for she was gone, you know, to pot the day before,—

No fixed stars, great or small,

Nothing, in fact, at all,—

Save one vast monster in the dark, known only by his roar !

4.

Such was the aspect of affairs, when, moving forward slowly,

A procession came from Westminster, in humble plight and lowly ;

Some you heard were muttering prayers,

Some were chaunting solemn airs,

And all appeared engaged in manners more or less holy.

5.

But can these be noble lords I see ? Can those pillars of society

Be publishing their sins abroad in keys of such variety ?

They were breaking heads just recently,

And behaving very indecently,

But now, how changed !—Who could expect to see so much propriety ?

6.

There certainly is something in the prospect of the grave

Has a wonderful effect, methinks, in making folks behave ;

Bad humours all removing,

And our manners much improving,

It gives the fool a knowing look,—a pious one, the knave.—

7.

Now turn we once again;—can those be Bishops, in their frocks,
Who seem with such solemnity attending to their flocks?

With the fear of death before 'em,

See what beautiful decorum!

About twelve or thirteen hours ago they were going it, like cocks.

8.

Yes, yes, these are the very men,—these are our old acquaintance,
But their fates, alas! are now involved in the same awful sentence;

So we can't but own the fitness

Of the change we here witness,

And, with Christian feeling, ought to hail such symptoms of repentance.

9.

Therefore I grieve the more to think, that aught occurred to mar
The admirable tone that had subsisted now so far;

But the brightest day, we know,

Some passing clouds will show,

And so it was with our pious train as they entered Temple-bar.

10.

For here a warm dispute arose, and a jury of a dozen,—
Since nothing else would do, you see,—was regularly chosen;

And the subject of this burst

Was, who should go first,

An Earl's half-brother's son-in-law or a Baron's third cousin!

11.

A dispute like this, at such a time, may seem to you to be
A very strange occurrence, but it don't astonish me,—

For of all the little things

To which a little soul clings,

There's none it hugs so long, sir, as the pride of its degree.

12.

Nothing else, worth notice, happened on the road, I think, unless,
 As for want of proper news is not unlikely, I confess,
 Some things may have occurred,
 Of which I have not heard,—
 For, oh! sir, never more did broad-sheet issue from the Press!

13.

That mighty voice was hushed! Its clack was ended! One short day,
 And the *best possible instructor* would be swept away!
 A period, so critical
 To the *Fourth Estate political*,
 Was never heard of since the days of Pitt and Castlereagh.

14.

But Pitt's revenge was visited on the heads of those who worried him,—
 The Comet's more impartial views alike on *all* heads hurried him;
 Pitt wanted to exhibit
 His enemies on a gibbet,
 Whereas the Comet, we must own, when he killed a fellow—*buried* him.

15.

Look down in pity, shades of Tooke and Hardy, whose sincerity
 The world begins to see was met by over much severity;
 And, oh! ghost of Major Cartwright!
 Since now all say thou art right,—
 No occasion to look up, I trust,—look down on thy posterity.

16.

For now about Reform, or any similar affair,
 Not a single other article could Editors prepare;
 No more important warning,
 Of an evening or a morning,
 Was to thunder from the Strand again or Printing-house-square.

17.

To Circulating Libraries no more would old maids send ;
In the price of magazines no more would publishers contend ;
Penny, halfpenny, or twopenny,
No more would they get up any ;—
Oh ! the monthly, weekly, daily, hourly press was at an end !

18.

For this melancholy reason I must also leave in doubt,
What different streets were passed through, in the order of the route ;
Of this a long report
Was prepared of the right sort,
'Twas even in the Press, they said,—but, oh ! it ne'er came out.

19.

Respecting which we therefore are—(what they were)—in the dark,—
Nor does it at all matter ; 'tis sufficient to remark,
That after having threaded,
Slow, silent, and bareheaded,
Through half the town, the pilgrimage—concluded in Hyde-park.

20.

'Twas on that ample plain that now, to every side extended,
In one promiscuous torrent the whole multitude descended ;
And to see that mass in motion,
Like the disordered ocean,—
Had it been at any other time, we should have thought it splendid.

21.

But we met to die !—and a meeting, called—*with objects of that kind*,—
Has not, for picturesque effects, the leisure or the mind.
Why we thought of dying here
It may not at first appear,
But many proper reasons, sir, may no less be assigned.

22.

For, first, who is so cocknified, to doubt but you would sprawl,
More comfortably on good green turf, than under a brick wall?
And since no house has roof
Warranted comet-proof,—
'Twas well to find, in a healthy spot, good dying room for all.

23.

There are some, I know, who, at sentiments like these profanely scoffing,
Think one place just as proper as another to go off in;
And, except for resurrection,
Warburton, and dissection,
Have not a single thought besides, on that side of the coffin.

24.

But I'm proud to say that *we* were not so improvident or silly, —
As a proof of which we did not let the Archbishop go, until he
Had visited, with his crosier,
The whole of the inclosure,
And consecrated all, from Hyde Park place to Piccadilly!

25.

So as this was now made Christian ground, 'twas thought fit to declare
That if any should destroy themselves, in moments of despair,
Unless such persons had
The propriety to go mad,—
They could not, by possibility, be suffered to stay there.

26.

This was good, as being calculated to impose a bridle
On any future movements of a nature suicidal, —
For, methinks, that wilful spirit
Which Englishmen inherit,
Were here not only criminal, but positively idle.



Sixth day, v. 20-31

27.

How we abuse that article, our life !—Some people pluck it
Out with a knife,—some blow it up with powder,—others duck it !
One thing is clear, for Horace
Has already said it for us,
Sooner or later all must kick—*the inevitable bucket!*

28.

This *golden truth* each word, each look, each action now confessed,
And some excellent results ensued, which must not be suppressed ;
“ *Omnes,*” they say, “ *ab uno,*”
So I'll mention what I *do* know,
And from one or two examples you may shadow out the rest.

29.

The King all night had been confessing, the muse and I espied him
Through a key-hole of our own,—his ghostly comforter beside him ;—
With his head upon the pillow,
There he told each peccadillo,—
The Bishop, with consoling hopes, at every pause supplied him.

30.

“ What oppressed his conscience most,” he said, “ was that cursed Ger-
manic Diet ;
“ He was on his death-bed now, and so 'twas useless to deny it ;
“ He now viewed it, as all must,
“ With feelings of disgust,”—
The Bishop said, “ Oh ! no,” but the King desired him to be quiet.

31.

“ 'Twas a shameful piece of business, and his sense of it was deep ;”
Here he gaped,—“ he knew—he felt—he”—here he could no longer keep
His eyes open, and presently
A duet proceeding pleasantly
Announced, in simple counterpoint, that both were fast asleep.

32.

I don't know how the king might feel in the morning when he rose,
And found this world within one revolution of its close ;

But I know a courier ran over,

That very day, to Hanover,

To say the people might, *thenceforth*, print—publish—what they chose !

33.

'Twas, perhaps, because all persons, of a well-behaved sort,
Invariably follow the example of the Court,—

That these generous concessions,

These atonements, and confessions,

Were witnessed now on every hand,—all o'er the Park, in short.

34.

A noble peer, whose name it might seem flattery to mention,
Haranguing from an elm-tree top, declared his fixed intention—

Deeming in the present state

No sacrifice too great—

Of renouncing, of his own accord, *all his retiring pension !*

35.

Now who is that, who—with meek air—towards some one near is turning?
I'm sure I've seen that face before, and I'm seldom long discerning ;

As I live, it is the Duke,

With a little Prayer Book,

And he's getting Brougham to hear him say a collect he's been learning !

36.

Alas ! alas ! he who so long in Fortune's favours frolicked,
By whom the French in all their lives before were never so licked ;

Who made 'em from the Spanish—

Wherever he came—vanish,

Who has got so many titles,—to be saying off a collect !

37.

But this is very proper, so disturb him not, I pray,—
 Now pay attention, let us hear what he is going to say;
 He asks his conscience whether—
 Putting all things together—
 He can ever be forgiven? and his conscience thunders—"Nay!" (*Ney!*)

38.

Then who is that old fellow there, that's crying himself hoarse,
 And to his pocket handkerchief so often has recourse?
 And, oh! only look here!
 Who can this be in the rear,
 Beating his breast, and tearing his wig, in passionate remorse?

39.

Is the former, he,—in Chancery once,—so famous an old drudge?
 And the other, can it be that most incomparable judge,
 So known for liberality,
 And strict impartiality,
 Except in cases where he owed a family a grudge?*

40.

But look again; who have we here, with such peculiar shyness,
 Holding his hand before his face?—Is't possible?—His Highness!
 Oh! sir, he had been shaving,—
 All earthly thoughts waiving,—
 To mortify the flesh,—and so his cheeks were sadly minus!

41.

But hush!—What says this scion of the illustrious house of Guelph?
 " 'Twas not Quentin did it,—no,—he told a fib,—and so did Jelfe;
 " It was not he, I own,
 " That knocked the ladies down:—
 " That ever I should tell the truth!—it was—it was—*myself!*"

* Small v. Attwood. The crisis of last May deserves reviewing. *Verbum sat.*

42.

But the prettiest sight of all, and which,—to persons who had leisure
For making observations,—was affecting beyond measure,

Was to see a little band
Of brothers, hand in hand,—

Whose faces I soon recognized with a melancholy pleasure.

43.

“ Oh ! Harry Cook, my boy,—oh ! Harry Cook, of Micheldever !

“ Do you think I tried to save you from the gallows ? No,—never !

“ Do you think you swung because

“ You had sinned against the laws ?—

“ No,—you swung for striking *me* !—Oh, Lord ! ’twas nothing else
whatever.

44.

“ Yet I myself, God knows, have struck my neighbour with impunity,

“ In a coal-cart man and wife I put, then took the opportunity !

“ Oh ! forgive us, Mrs Deacle,

“ Who dragged you to that veh’cle,

“ We humbly plead :” then all joined in—“ Forgive us, oh !” in unity.

45.

What a pity such confessions don’t more frequently take place,
For the satisfaction of the thing, as well as for the grace ;

Of the *case*, now, of *the Barings*

You’ll have had many hearings,

But, perhaps, you never knew before the *bearings* of the *case*.

46.

But, oh ! sir, as to telling all I chanced to see or hear,—

Though it would be most instructive,—’twere impossible, I fear ;

For I may safely say

I both saw and heard that day

More things in half an hour than I could tell you in a year.

47.

With a mind, for wisdom tinctured with a wholesome predilection,—
Having taken, at a tender age, a serious direction,—
 Of course I could not miss
 An opportunity like this,—
So pregnant with materials, for study and reflection.

48.

Nor need it be remarked, I trust, that the author of this diary
Being of a mild and quiet sort, and the opposite of fiery,
 In surveying the field of action,
 And thus noting each transaction,
Could be guided by no other spirit, than that of free inquiry.—

49.

Such views while entertaining, I'd the happiness to get
'Mong the literary circles, sir,—where all the wits were met
 (Nobility and gentry)
 Of the nineteenth cent'ry,—
P'rhaps the largest *conversazione* ever heard of yet.

50.

On witnessing this splendid combination of ability,
I had pulled a little note-book out, to afford me the facility
 Of taking, in short-hand, a
 Few hasty memoranda,—
But of that attempt I soon perceived the utter inutility.

51.

For had I all the heads and hands of him the poets fable,
To accomplish such a task as this I never had been able,—
 The nature of the meeting
 Such endeavours all defeating,—
Like a very large assembly held, some years ago,—at Babel.

52.

So the reader must content himself with a most imperfect summary ;
The words I first distinguished, were—" Oh, pardon all my flummery !

" I know I want a trimming,

" But then, Lord, the old women —

" They read me, they *would* read me"—'twas the last of Bob Montgomery.

53.

" Had I been smothered years ago," cries Hogg, " 't had been a charity,
" Before I ever so mistook my way to popularity

" As to publish my hotch-potch,

" So eminently Scotch,—

" And expect the world would take — for wit — my national vulgarity !"

54.

But among the goodly penitents, whose sorrow to have sinned
Was vented in confession, none appeared so out of wind

As the great Dramatic Licenser,

Who of virtue has such nice sense, sir,—

And his grief was now that ever he so *broadly* should have *grinned*.

55.

Rogers and Moore just then came by, engaged in parting chat,
Where Colman, all prostrated, on his face was lying flat ;

Says Moore to Rogers—" Sammy,

" It's past a joke, eh, *damme* ?"

Says Colman, " Lord, where I am judge, they never may say that !"*

56.

Then rose so loud the chorus—what with roarer, grunter, squeaker—
It was no longer possible to identify each speaker ;

Some outcries, from the tongues

Of those who had strong lungs,

Was all that reached you,—looks bespoke the agonies of the weaker.

* See his evidence taken before the Dramatic Committee. *Morality v. Damme*, &c.

57.

I just could catch such phrases as—"From justice when I fled—!"

"Oh! that puff I wrote myself!"—"Oh! dear, the smutty things I said!"

"Oh! that simile of Cowley,

"That I stole from him so foully;"—

"Oh! the lie I told!"—"The bribe I took!"—"The calumny I spread!"

58.

Thus the Bard, while there was time, like an intelligent beholder,
Went peeping about, and listening over every body's shoulder.

But that time was now consumed,

And his speculations doomed

To be broken short,—before he was another minute older.

59.

Midnight was passed, and the morning watch had told the Seventh day,
When lo! there came—What, what, good Muse? What came there
then, I pray?

Yet we easily may guess,

For we could expect no less,—

Yes, yes, there came—one may conceive, although one dare not say!

60.

Alas! then, sir,—Well, speak at once, for God's sake say the worst;
Say that the last grand crash came down, and earth to atoms burst,—

Making Heaven and Hell to rock

With the fury of the shock,—

We knew that it must come to this, we knew it from the first.

61.

No longer, therefore, in suspense our anxious minds to hold,
Speak, speak, and all the truth—however horrible—unfold.

Alas! then—'twas no more

Than a voice, sir, at the door,

Saying—"I've been knocking here this hour, the breakfast will be
cold!"

62.

I rubbed my eyes, and—" Oh!"—I said, beginning to revive,

" Is it nothing but a dream, and are ye all of you alive ?

" How provoking!—Where's my shirt?—

" What, you're sure there's no one hurt ?

" And didn't you then *see* any thing—*hear* any thing—arrive ?"

63.

" No, 'twas a dream, I see it was ; heigho ! but where's the rest of it ?

" That glorious smash!—I think I'll go to sleep again in quest of it ;

" For I should have liked so well

" To have seen them all pell-mell,"—

But it can't be helped, the dream is out, so now let's make the best of it.

64.

The Fates have spoken. Humbug still shall wind her noisy blast ;

Of fools and rogues the future crop shall still exceed the past ;

E'en the helpless Boroughmonger

Shall rave a little longer ;—

But the dream, the dream—sweet comfort—shall be verified at last.

65.

The Comet's gone,—but why ? he knows, full well, the meal we owe him.
So it's just—to *get an appetite !* and the heavens, next time, will
show him

Like a hungry lion roaring,

Coming down upon us pouring ;—

This world must have an end some time,—so must a person's poem.

66.

Then prepare, ye Christians, Pagans, and disciples of Mahomet,
For the stroke will come at last, and there'll be no escaping from it ;

Live peaceably, don't quarrel,

Reform—for that's the moral—

And ever while you live, expect—the COMING OF THE COMET.

THE END.



